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THE NEW HOLY ALLIANCE FOR CHINA

*By Albert Bushnell Hart, LL.D., Professor of Government in
Harvard University*

From present day amenities we turn to speak of the Holy Alliance, a subject not precisely relevant to the addresses of the morning, or likely to fit with the addresses that are to follow. I come as an amateur to speak to persons already better informed, to those who know what they are talking about. It is the peculiar province of the scholar first to appropriate the materials laboriously collected by other people; second, to generalize upon those materials, but in a spirit different from that of those who have collected them; and third, to promulgate what he hopes may be the eventual truth.

The historical criticisms of the closet scholars have ages ago attracted the attention of the great writers of an older race. One of the early Chinese classics remarks that "scholars teach men what is contrary to your laws. When they hear that an ordinance has been issued, everyone sets to discussing it with all his learning. In the court they are dissatisfied in heart; out of it they keep talking on the streets. While they make a pretence of vaunting their Master, they consider it fine to have extraordinary views of their own. And so they lead the people on to be guilty of murmuring and of evil speaking." As such a discontented scholar, I feel too much like the schoolboy who was called upon to define figure of speech, and to give an example. This was the result: "A figure of speech is when you say what you do not mean and yet mean what you say. Example: 'He blows his own horn.' That does not mean that he has a horn, but that he blows it."

In 1815 was founded by three great European powers through their sovereigns, Francis the First, Frederick William, and Alexander the First, a solemn league which they

called the Holy Alliance. In course of time all of the European powers gave it their adhesion except three—the Papacy, the Ottoman Porte, and Great Britain, though the Prince Regent, caused it to be remarked that England was in sympathy with the combination. If the Holy Alliance had only been sincere there would have been no more wars, no pestilences, no strikes, no duns—it was a great universal sedative, a mutual political insurance company. The purpose was that there never should be any more disturbances of the then existing international status.

The sovereigns held several congresses, at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818; at Troppau and Laybach in 1820 and 1821; and at Verona in 1822. They issued to the world some remarkable statements of their high moral purposes. Thus in 1820 they declared that the “Powers are exercising an incontestable right in taking common measures in respect to those states in which the overthrow of the government may result in an hostile attitude toward all continuous and legitimate government.” In the next year at Laybach they solemnly announced that “useful and necessary changes in the legislation and administration of states must emanate alone from the free will and enlightening impulse of those whom God had rendered responsible for power,” that is, from themselves. This lofty spirit reminds one of the remark of a great railroad president a few years ago, that the commercial affairs of the country should be carried on by those to whom God had given authority over the property of the country.

The Holy Alliance very soon found its opportunity when revolutions broke out in Spain, in Naples, and in Portugal, and it set itself to restore the monarchs whose faithful subjects did not appreciate them. The most striking thing about the Holy Alliance is not so much that it existed, as that its whole effort was an abject failure. To be sure Austria as the representative of the Holy Alliance crushed out the revolution in Naples; but Naples eventually became a part of the free and united Italy. France restored absolutism in 1823; but Spain, after a period of ninety years is still going through a process of protest against absolutism. A revolution broke out in Greece in 1821, and then and there

began that century-long process which through the arms of four of the Balkan Christian powers is apparently just reaching its end. The attempt to subvert free thought was absolutely hopeless. That is the Holy Alliance assumed to determine what should be the proper type of government and political thought in Europe: it absolutely failed in maintaining its cherished type of government; and it became a laughing stock for the nations.

In the year of grace 1912 we observe a combination of European powers partly operating in China, partly operating at the headquarters of their governments in Europe, which is fairly comparable to the Holy Alliance in its form, in its purposes, and, we trust, in the eventual failure of its aims. The basal idea of the combination of European powers is that six associated foreign nations can better decide than the Chinese themselves what shall be the future government and the destiny of that great empire. This principle is not a new one. I see before me people who have lived for years in China, and they can tell you better than a visitor for a few months about the general relations of diplomats and commercial men to the Chinese government and people. They will however all agree that from the time that the European powers first broke into China, which was in 1840, the Europeans have in general adhered to the idea that their presence in China was not based on advantage to the Chinese, but on their own purposes, and for their own benefit. Thus Burlingame wrote in 1868: "Yet, notwithstanding this manifest progress, there are people who will tell you that China has made no progress, that her views are retrograde, and they will tell you that it is the duty of the Western duty powers to combine for the purpose of coercing China into reforms that they may desire and which she does not desire—who undertake to state that these people have no rights which they are bound to respect. In their coarse language they say, 'Take her by the throat.' Using the tyrant's plea they say they know better what China wants than China herself does." That, you see, was many years ago, nearly half a century, in a period of impatience with China.

One reason for this attempt on the part of the Europeans to control China is an ignorance of the real character of the Chinese. Of all the people who visit China and even who spend years there, few really become sufficiently acquainted with the Chinese to put them within the possibility of understanding the conditions of the Chinese mind or the ultimate purposes of the Chinese government. It is a standing criticism upon foreign business men that they associate so little with the Chinese; that so few of them ever acquire the language, that so very few qualify themselves to give an expert opinion on what is going on in China. Many years ago an English consul said, "There is perhaps no country in the world frequented by the English-speaking race in which merchants are so lamentably ignorant of the customs and resources of the locality in which they live as they are at this moment in China, and this is entirely to be attributed to a want of familiarity with the language."

Perhaps there has been a similar ignorance on the part of the Chinese. Thus Wo Jen, grand secretary of the imperial library in 1868 wrote, "As to observing the customs of the foreigners and learning from them—their customs are nothing but lasciviousness and cunning, while their inclinations are simply fiendish and malignant." Of course that is brutally insulting for an Oriental to say of an Occidental, but when we say similar things of the Chinese it is only a needed rebuke to an inferior people.

In 1868 or thereabouts a man named Robertson wrote in an English review: "If China will assent to progress and development of her resources under a system of well-considered pressure by the foreign ministers; even if its rulers are under fear of armed compulsion if they refuse, we cannot see that the exercise of this pressure in a reasonable manner by the foreign governments is objectionable. Any improvement in China is possible only under such a system. We have no desire to be unjust or unreasonable toward the Chinese but we strongly object to any assurance being given the Chinese authorities that the time and manner of their progress are left to their own discretion, and that therefore, they need no longer fear to

disregard the demands of the British minister at Pekin. . . . The judgment of the Chinese themselves on the perils that beset their future course is utterly worthless."

That, of course, is exactly in line with the present attempt of foreign powers to decide the destiny of China. I quote it simply to illustrate the underlying idea held by many of the diplomats, that China exists chiefly to furnish opportunities for the application of the advanced principles of the West, that God created that people, not in order that there might be a Chinese nation, but that they might furnish a field for Chinese investment.

The European powers were a long time, three centuries in fact, in obtaining access to the Chinese ports, because of an obstinate Chinese determination not to trade with exterior nations. Under great pressure the Chinese were prevailed upon to open up a certain number of their ports as points of contact between themselves and the outside world. Then began a system of European regulation of these ports, and then the ticklish business of a European power undertaking to say, "You must make even your customs duties to suit us." We must not forget that the bottom idea of all the treaty stipulations as to extraterritoriality, customs rates and intercourse is not the welfare of the people in Asia, but the profit and ease of doing business by the people in the West, and the prestige of the governments that thus intervene.

As soon as a foothold in the treaty ports was gained, began the process of seizing territory. Most of the powers wanted to push up into the country as far as they could back of the treaty ports. They were always demanding more privileges of intercourse, and of late years have made a determined and concerted campaign for concessions from the Chinese. The Chinese are not held competent to decide on their own means of transportation. And foreigners are eager to build railroads, not because they think the Chinese need railroads, but because the European and American bankers need the profit of the railroads. The imperial government was very ill-organized to resist such pressure; at the start it was not accustomed to relations with foreign

powers: it formed the Tsung Li Yamen with great regret, and stolidly held back in all negotiations for further power and influence to foreigners.

The whole situation in China is complicated by the foreign possession of so many pieces of territory which the Chinese fondly suppose are theirs. To say nothing about Cochin-China, Hong Kong, Kowloon, Tsintau, Wei Hai Woi and Port Arthur are now in the possession of the Germans, the English and the Japanese; and the Japanese and Russians are occupying parts of Manchuria and Mongolia. That is, four of the six powers that are now engaged in the attempt to manage and control China, are at the present moment in possession of large territories, every square yard of which the Chinese look upon as filched from them.

For a long time the powers engaged in single wars with China, each on its own account, and those wars were accompanied by a ruthlessness and destruction which can hardly be supposed to be a high moral lesson to the Chinese. If a foreign army should capture New York and plunder the Metropolitan Museum of Art and sell its irreplaceable treasures to peddlers, we should hardly think it a mark of Chinese civilization! Yet that was just what happened to the winter palace in 1860. Since 1900 the European powers have usually made it a point not to ask for individual privileges, but for joint privileges; so that the experience of China was that if Russia got a concession for a railroad, the French were instantly besieging for a like favor. And if Russia seized a piece of Chinese territory the Germans thought they must have a similar piece of stolen goods. Since the expedition to Peking in 1900 there has been a common military understanding.

The Chinese have always resented this form of diplomacy. They look upon their European friends as the Russian hero looked upon the king of the sea when the sea monster said: “ ‘Tis a long time since I have eaten fresh flesh, and lo! here it comes right into my very hands! Welcome, friend. Come here, and let me see at which end of you I shall begin!” Then the Tsarevitch began to say that among good people one behaved not so badly as to eat another up. ‘That is

too much,' cried the sea monster, 'he comes to force his own rules and regulations upon the homes of other people.'" Is it an exaggeration to say that the feeling of Europeans has been that any attempt of the Chinese to prevent the entry into and the commercial use of their country was regarded as an affront to Europe?

More recently has developed a common responsibility, particularly shown in the negotiations for indemnities after the Boxer outbreak. One of the interesting things about this combination is that a new European power has joined it, and that is Japan. The Japanese claim the privileges granted to Western powers—such as the right of intervention, extraterritoriality, and the right to trade on the Yangtze in subsidized vessels. They have put up a magnificent group of buildings at Hankow.

All this suggests the sublime purpose of the Holy Alliance, to do people good against their will; but the difficulty is increased by a commercial combination, the purpose of which is first of all to obtain concessions, for railroads, mines, and other needed enterprises. Anybody can see that China lacks capital, a need no more common there than on the Pacific slope of the United States, or on northwestern Canada. Such an infusion of borrowed wealth would enable the country rapidly to develop its means of transportation and its immense physical resources. The prime difficulty is that the powers conceive that they have an inherent right to invest money in China on terms which they themselves lay down; while in general the Chinese believe that the commercial agreements which they are asked to ratify are unfavorable to them. At the moment the burning question is that of loans. China has long been a borrower on not very favorable terms, and there is already a considerable national debt. The revolution has cost a lot of money and there is a demand for more loans first of all to pay off and disband troops. A group of bankers favored by the six powers have established themselves as a syndicate for this business, and propose terms on which they will place a \$300,000,000 loan.

The six-power loan under consideration in November,

1912, is practically the work of a commercial Holy Alliance formed to regulate Oriental affairs. The determination of the ministers of six great powers in consultation to push through a financial transaction which China does not like is an unseemly spectacle, not relieved by the undeniable fact that weak powers are frequently called upon to yield to stronger forces. A foreign administration of the loans is one of the conditions, though hard and humiliating—for it is urged that Orientals cannot conduct their native finances. The Japanese know better, for they have almost dispensed with foreign financial engineers and managers.

The next demand, which is at least evidently favored by the powers, is that if money is lent it shall be lent only by a combination of the bankers of the six powers. I regret that the United States should be one of the partners in such an enterprise. The American bankers are justified in looking after their own interests, and in finding a profitable investment for their money; but it is a serious business for the bankers to insist that they will lend the money only in case a foreign administrator is to follow it. For the power to supervise the expenditure of that money includes the power to control much of the finances and the public works of China. It involves an inspection and regulation of the internal financial administration of the country.

In the background the Chinese believe that they see the shadow of the armed man. A few years ago they gave Russia permission to build a railroad across Manchuria and to protect it with guards. The Russian conception of guards was an army of 50,000 men intending to stay on Chinese soil, and their descendants forever. The Chinese suspect that it is the intention of the powers, whenever they think it necessary, to send troops into the country to enforce the carrying out of conditions. In the six groups each group has its government behind it, which demands a share in the loan for its citizens as a matter of right. What is the reason for this pressure? Mainly that each group of bankers expects that the Chinese will spend at least a part of the loans for materials and supplies, and that the orders will go through the loaning bankers and to their friends and commercial connections.

I speak subject to correction by those who are better acquainted with the subject, but when I was in China in 1909 that was the point stated to me; and the negotiations for the loan now appear to turn on that issue.

Outside of finance, what is the relation of the New Holy Alliance to the Chinese republic? One reason for the present combination is undoubtedly that some of the powers are not pleased with the proposed democratic government of China. But it is no longer possible for any one European or American power seriously to affect the internal government of China, for the potential strength of that nation is coming to be more and more realized.

Of the six powers, two are themselves democracies, the United States and France. On the other hand an Asiatic republic is on the face of things repugnant to both Russia and Japan. And there is perhaps no country in the world that is so genuinely democratic as China, no country in which the affairs of the local communities are more systematically regulated by the people themselves. This distrust of democracy is combined with a feeling that the republic cannot stand; and this objection is confronted by the fact that there is no other kind of national government now in existence or in prospect in China, no royal dynasty, no acknowledged oligarchy. Granted the weakness of the present republic is stronger than any government which could be established by external influence and pressure.

The real objection is to the possibility of a permanent strong power in China which shall realize the inconvenience and national discredit through foreign domination. Any strong Chinese power will certainly address itself to the status of the concessions in the treaty ports in which the Europeans rule portions of Chinese territory.

Equally acute is the question of the government of the European colonies within the Chinese boundaries. If the Chinese government, republic or kingdom, is once aroused to the possibility of expelling the foreigners, the era of European domination is over. Hence the unwillingness to allow the low scale of import duties to be changed for it is intimately related to the trade of the treaty ports. Of

course the United States recognizes that a system of high duties on imports is inequitable to foreign powers and absolutely inconsistent with the principles of international law.

The privileges of the interior, especially those of the Yangtse Kiang, are also involved. Admiral Mahan says: "The close approach and contact of eastern and western civilization, and the resultant mutual effects, are matters which can no longer be disregarded, or postponed from any arguments derived from the propriety of non-interference, or from the conventional rights of a so-called independent state to regulate its own affairs. They have ceased to be its own in the sense of Chinese isolation—as the nations have insisted that we shall be allowed to sell and buy without pretending that the Chinese subject should be compelled to trade with us—so they will have to insist that currency be permitted to our ideas, liberty to exchange thought in Chinese territory with individual Chinamen, though equally without any compulsion. "This is substantially a doctrine that western powers have an innate right to exercise benevolent compulsion on the Chinese to compel them to receive foreigners on terms dictated by the foreigners.

The immediate evidence of this spirit is the indifference to the substantial Chinese interests in Mongolia and in Manchuria. While unready or unwilling to prevent the virtual conquest of these provinces from China, the six powers pretend to make far-reaching decisions with respect to the future government of China. For if you are going to put in an administrator to superintend a loan, that means that you have a right to keep order and maintain the value of your security. You must suppress revolutions—not every revolution, of course; only such revolutions as you think are undesirable for your interests. The underlying principle of the present Holy Alliance in the East is to keep China weak politically, while trying to make her industrially strong; and to see that the results of commercial gain shall not get out of the control of those who now take responsibility for its finances.

I submit that in such an Holy Alliance the United States has no rightful part. It is contrary to a century long policy

of avoiding combinations with other powers. It is contrary to the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine, which was a protest against the operations of the old Holy Alliance in America. It is contrary to our policy in regard to the Panama canal: this country admitted no European partner in that great enterprise. It is contrary to our economic interest, which is for a productive China.

Nor is it necessary for the United States to dictate to China in behalf of its own money power. It is no time for us, when we are trying to curb corporations which menace the existence of democratic government in America, to go out into the Orient to use the authority of the United States in aid of the projects of similar aggregations of capital. The old Holy Alliance failed, and the New Holy Alliance is destined to a like failure, because it is unnatural and topheavy. The United States through the Monroe Doctrine precipitated the collapse of the old combination and should stand by its doctrine of the independence of nations.

It is not for us to dictate to other peoples what their government shall be; we are not entirely successful in orderly and popular government here at home. Is it likely that by joining with five other powers, not one of which is sincerely sympathetic with our idea of government, we can help the Chinese to set up a solid government? To my mind the serious question and issue of the moment is: what kind of government will be most advantageous to the Chinese? No nation, no group of nations, has a right to insist that the commercial affairs of another nation shall be regulated for the benefit of outsiders.

The whole scheme really rests upon the supposed fundamental incapacity of the Chinese. That comes with ill grace from such moderns as we are. Many of the Chinese were living in cities with an elaborate civilization when our Teutonic ancestors were pursuing the aurochs for an evening meal and had not so much as heard of the Romans. The antiquity of the Chinese is a proof that they have some power to make a government for themselves. For their isolation they have had excuse: other nations have not been kind to them. The Chinese wall, typical in our speech

of an unreasoning and hurtful barrier, is one of the world's greatest achievements because it was successful, because for centuries it did keep out those mounted neighbors that were such a scourge to China.

In the long run the six-power system is against the interests of the six powers. What will be the effect on China if this week or next the European powers are swept into a general war? If it were impossible to reinforce the present scanty European garrisons how long would Tsintau remain German or, Kowloon English, or the Shanghai concessions European? If I were a Chinese I would stand as long as I lived for the doctrine that my country is entitled to its own territory and to its own control.

So far as the ability of the Chinese to maintain a government is concerned it is not within the compass nor the province of allied nations to alter their circumstances or character. Doubtless the governmental conditions are crude, clumsy and imperfect; but they will not be improved by a six-part tutorship. The Chinese deserve to be taken on their merits, as shown by experience; upon their ability or inability to maintain a government.

Hence it would seem in accordance with American policy to recognize the republic of China, instead of joining in embarrassing it. I do not claim that the Chinese are perfect people, or even that they are capable of maintaining a republican government; but they have become the greatest potential power in Asia. I predict that there will be a Chinese nation, a Chinese language and literature, and a Chinese influence, quite as long as there is an English or an American nation, language and literature. I believe that China is one of the prime forces in the world. It is simple morality that the United States of America should consider the interests of the Chinese in dealing with them as well as the interests of our citizens. Proper trade between any two nations is mutually profitable and hospitable. America ought to be the helpful nation to China, an uplifting and sustaining influence in the present great difficulties of that government. I believe that it is not our business to be part and parcel of a combination founded in part for the protection of Europeans

in China, but essentially based in selfishness. The commercial organization of the present Holy Alliance is at bottom a movement for making money out of the Chinese by Europeans and Americans. As a money-making enterprise the six-power financial scheme lies outside of our legitimate national interests.